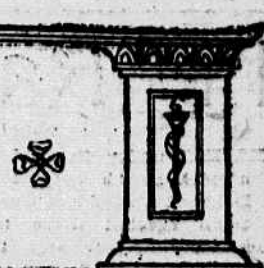




# The Sunday Star Magazine.

Features Fiction

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 1, 1918.



## The Mysterious Ways of Wang Foo By Sidney C. Partridge

### The Sandalwood Fan

THE morning edition of the Shanghai Daily News of July 19, 191—, contained the following striking paragraph:

#### Mysterious Death of the Tao-tai's Deputy at the Wellington Hotel.

Our readers will be sorry to hear of the sudden death last evening of Mr. Lo Tung Choo, the popular deputy of His Excellency Chang, tao-tai of Shanghai. He was attending a dinner given by the directors of the new Mutual Spinning Company, at the Wellington Hotel on the Bund, and was taken suddenly ill at the close of the meal.

He was carried to an adjoining apartment and Dr. Hall-Clayton, surgeon to the British consulate, was immediately summoned, but all his efforts to resuscitate the unfortunate gentleman proved unavailing and he died shortly before midnight.

Mr. Lo was one of the most promising of the younger generation of Chinese officialdom and had always shown himself most courteous and obliging in his relations with European residents. His decease is a great loss to this community and leaves a vacancy which his excellency will find hard to fill.

The usual reticence displayed by the attending physicians in commenting upon the case, and the refusal of the health officer to give any details to the press, have thrown an air of mystery about the occurrence, which, we hope, in time will be satisfactorily explained, but which we must all very much regret.

A week had passed after the above notice and the reading public of Shanghai had begun to forget the incident, when a little group of men sitting on the porch of the Municipal Club, were joined in the evening by three others. They were the Chevalier Brouhard, consul general for France; Dr. Hall-Clayton (formerly surgeon of the 9th Punjab Artillery), and James Mactavish, esq., director general of the new Mutual Spinning Company, one of the most prominent commercial enterprises in all the far east. It was a hot and moist July night and every breath of air blowing up the river channel was welcome to make life endurable.

"Well," said the consul, as he replaced his glass of aerated water and lighted his Manila cheroot, "have they come to any final decision as to that case of the tao-tai's deputy?" He turned an inquiring look toward the surgeon.

"Mysterious as ever," was the reply. "Inspector Sharpley and I have been closeted two hours this afternoon with Detective Morehead—a really clever chap, by the way, that Moorehead; could have given Sherlock Holmes any number of points and beaten him at the game—but we don't seem to get any nearer to it."

"Was he in good health at the time?"

"Perfect, as far as we doctors know."

"Something must have been wrong, then, with the food. Chinese cooks are awfully careless in this sickly season and one never knows what they may serve up to you. A little piece of tainted fish or some over-ripe fruit may cost the unwary European his very life, you know."

"Yes, true; but this was not in Chinatown or in a private house; it was in the Wellington and every particle of food served there is under constant and most careful inspection. The proprietor and chef are both old eastern hands and know these risks as well as we do."

"Then," said the consul, after a moment's pause, "the only thing is poison. You never can tell what these chaps may do, if one has a deep-seated grudge against another. I tell you, they'll stop at nothing. Couldn't one of the assistant cooks have smuggled it into a special dish or the table boy have dropped it into the wine?"

"Not likely," replied the surgeon. "We have gone into all that most carefully and we are positive that neither ate nor drank anything that was not shared by all alike, and not another soul felt any bad effects whatever. No, I do not place any credence in the poison theory—unless—" and here he slowly rose and walked to the railing overlooking the sluggish river just below that seemed to conceal oriental mysteries from European minds—"unless it be some deadly drug that no modern medical man has ever heard of, and, you know, we haven't been working and studying and practicing in these wretched lands for over fifty years for nothing."

He touched the bell and the waiting celestial instantly responded. "Boy, go catch me my 'ma-foo' and speakee he my wantee trap just now go homeside."

The vision departed, and having duly summoned the waiting horse-boy from the gate-house and his pipe, announced: "Tap all ready now, sir," and the busy doctor bade the little company good night.

"That only shows," said Mr. Mactavish, "how little you can know about them, no matter how many years you may live among them. They'll outwit you every time. I wonder what the next problem will be that we will have to deal with?"

"Well," said the consul, "your company needn't worry. You got the property for your mill all right that you have been haggling for this last half year. He affixed the tao-tai's seal to the release, didn't he, before he was taken ill?"

"Yes, he sealed it just before he swooned away, and that is the other strange and mysterious performance; for the release, as we all supposed—

CHANG LED THE OLD PRIEST INTO THE PRIVATE DINING ROOM AND GAVE HIM THE MOST VIVID DESCRIPTION OF THE SCENE.

the good Lord knows we paid and bribed every living soul in that blessed tao-tai's yamen to get it anyhow—the release was for the down-river lots and not for those up-river lots beyond the French concession. We're let in, you see, for sixty thousand taels instead of fifty, and now it's too late to change it."

"That's what Bill Nye meant when he said that their ways were 'child-like and bland,' wasn't it?" chimed in Capt. Burrows of the American steamer in port.

"Gentlemen," remarked the Hon. Mr. McAllister of his majesty's consular court, as the little company broke up, "here is the case in a nutshell, I give it to you as I would to a jury. It is yours, go home and sleep over it and let the chief of police and myself know when you reach your verdict. A company of European capitalists decide to build a spinning mill in Shanghai and start looking for a suitable piece of land on the river front. After a long delay two pieces are offered to them—a downtown piece at fifty thousand taels and an upriver piece at sixty thousand. As both are on actual Chinese soil the seal and release of the tao-tai are necessary before the purchase can be consummated. After an end of interviews with middlemen and consuls and yamen officials the decision seems to be in favor of the lower priced property and a dinner is arranged at the Wellington Hotel at which the principals are to meet, and the tao-tai sends his deputy to affix the seal. All goes merrily until the coffee and cigars, then the document is produced and the deputy seals it and the transaction is complete. Now for the denouement: No sooner is the deed properly sealed than the deputy swoons away. He is carried out and, in spite of all that the most skillful English

physicians can do, he dies within a few hours without regaining consciousness. On opening the deed later in the evening, to the utter astonishment of all concerned, it is for another piece of property at a much higher price! Yet every one present at the dinner was an eyewitness of all the transactions and heard the deed distinctly read. Here are the three nuts for you to crack, viz.: (1) How was the deed exchanged, if exchanged it was? (2) Who was responsible for the deputy's sickness and subsequent decease? (3) How and why did it occur at just that critical moment?"

While these three problems were being submitted to the gentlemen at the club, the following conversation, bearing most vitally on the self-same subject, took place in the inner office of the Shanghai Inspectorate general of police, between Chief Detective Morehead and his superior officer.

"I tell you, chief, it's beyond me, and I rather think it's beyond us all. I saw the tao-tai's second deputy today and he tells me that they have worked just as hard over it as we have and they can't get any nearer to it. They understand their own people, and I tell you—for I know something of their wily ways of forcing and torturing a confession out of a suspect—if they can't figure it out there is no more use of you and me and any of the European men wasting any more time on it. Let's give it up and leave it alone for a while, and then perhaps later on something or somebody may turn up, as old Dickens said, and shed a little daylight on the darkness."

"I am almost tempted to agree with you," answered the inspector, "and yet, don't you know, I hate to acknowledge our failure. It puts us all wrong with the natives. This

thing occurred in the foreign settlement and in our largest and best hotel, at a dinner right under our very eyes, and we not only can't find any clue to the mystery, but our best physicians had to let the poor chap die without even being able to tell us what he died of. Where will our boasted western civilization and skill stand with the Chinese after this? Even if they haven't got many newspapers to read, this thing—so my boy tells me—has been spread and gossiped all up and down the coast and river and every time they repeat it it naturally grows worse. I can't stand all those yellow papers that they paste up on the corners of their native streets where the crowds gather, but I shouldn't be a bit surprised to be told by some missionary that they say: 'How Chinese government officials are trapped and murdered in foreign hotels!' Indeed, I have some papers like that in my office safe now."

"There's only one human being that I've ever heard of that can really help us, if we can find him, chief."

"Well, who is it? Not that mysterious chap from Hongkong? 'Wily Wang Foo,' as they call him down there. You don't mean him, do you?"

"The same; you remember how he traced out that fellow that stole the

governor's jade stone signet, don't you, when all Hongkong gave it up."

"Yes, indeed, I remember that case distinctly. I don't believe we should lose face, do you, by sending for him now?"

"It surely couldn't do any harm, sir, especially if we made it clear that we only wanted some temporary assistance."

"You're right, Morehead, we will wire for him tonight. As the old saying is, 'there is no harm in trying.'"

This will explain why the faithful Ah Sing, devoted house boy of Mrs. Morehead and personal valet of Detective Morehead, carried an urgent telegram (apparently from the Morehead residence, for it wasn't always wise to send official messages from the police of one port to another in a matter involving secrecy) for a private residence in Hongkong that self-same evening and trudged slowly with it along the Bund. The wires flashed it out into the ocean and down the Formosa channel and around into the beautiful harbor of "the valley of fragrant waters" and, ere the hour of midnight struck, a trusty messenger had summoned Wang Foo the "wily" to an important mission in the great central seaport of Shanghai. Four days later the Messageries maritimes steamer dropped anchor off the Woosung bar and after a restful night at the "Inn of the Travelers' Peace" our famous detective, clad in the modest robes of a Chinese scholar, sent in his card to the private office of Inspector Sharpley.

"I am very glad to meet you Mr. Wang," said the inspector, extending to him a most cordial welcome, "for though I have often heard of you and of your wonderful ways, I believe I have never had the pleasure of personally meeting you."

"The honor is mine, I assure you, Mr. Inspector," replied Wang, in the most fluent and correct of English. "I appreciate you sending for me and it will be a privilege to serve you and the department in any way I can."

"The truth is, Mr. Wang, that we are in quite a perplexity here over a case that seems to have baffled the Chinese authorities as much as it has ourselves. Believing, from what I know of your record, that you can help us in this matter, I have taken the liberty of sending for you."

"You refer, I presume, to the Wellington Hotel incident, do you not?"

"Ah! You know of it, then?"

"Not all that I should like to know. I have read what the native and the foreign papers have had to say about it and I have heard it discussed at some Chinese clubs and—" he hesitated for a moment and then said, slowly and significantly, "other places where men are wont to gather."

"Suppose we go into the matter thoroughly now. I will tell you all I know about it from beginning to end and then I shall be glad to have you ask me freely any and every question you wish."

The inspector suited the action to the word and gave Wang a complete account of the case, stopping only from time to time to answer some brief but very leading question which his Chinese visitor read from a notebook in his wallet, and to which he jotted down what appeared to be very careful answers. It was long past the fifth hour when he arose to go.

"Let me see," he said; "this is Wednesday, is it not? Next Monday evening, if all goes well, I should like to meet you here again. Let the time and place of our meeting be kept entirely quiet, and—" he raised his finger and placed it to his lips—"you will not consider it necessary to let any one, native or foreign, know that I have arrived. We understand each other? I think we do! Good morning, sir."

In the third alley to the right as one goes north up the White Stag Passage from the central boulevard or "Ma-Loo" of China's great seaport is the modest shop of the basket maker, whose sign bears the symbols of the "Threefold Blessing." It is the center of a little colony from Hongkong who make the baskets and chairs and sedans of willow, now so popular in the western world. Thither, early Thursday morning, came Mr. Wang Foo, with his white pigskin trunk and his roll of bedding, borne on the pliant bamboo of an aged coolie. There was no need of knocking, for there were no doors to unlock. Everything was open to the street and passersby, as the various members of the family all piled their daily tasks in full view of the world. The old father recognized him at once—they had been neighbors in the Southern Isle—and rose and greeted him and placed the seat beside the table and brought the water pipe and smoking tea.

"Venerable elder-born, we greet you. Welcome to our humble home! Deign to be seated and refresh yourself. Alas, 'tis but poor hospitality that we can offer, our rice is coarse, and the tea, we fear, is cold."

"Excuse me for thus intruding without the proper rites or ceremonies. I am quite unworthy of your welcome and your kindness. Ten thousand thanks I offer and greetings from all your friends in Fragrant Waters."

In the little upper room, which he had occupied on a former visit, Wang Foo made himself at home and from the basket-maker's shop he sauntered daily forth to solve the mystery for which he had come to the northern city. Sometimes they knew him, sometimes they knew him not, for the capacious pigskin trunk contained many and marvelous disguises. In the morning early, as was his wont, he opened his little volume of the Confucian Analects and chose therefrom his motto for the day. "Chun-tse-woo-pen: The superior man bends his attention to what is radical," he read, and then he closed it and said:

(Continued on Eighth Page.)



# The Observer Writes of Big Lesson Taught by the War

THE boy from over there and I having threshed out the war, dissecting and analyzing thoroughly all of his experience, asked him one more question: "What is the big lesson that this war has taught you?" He did not hesitate a moment, as I feared he would, but with a sparkle in his eye, replied: "I have learned that fear is the most foolish thing in the world." For a moment then he was silent, and I could tell by the dreamy look in his eyes that his mind was carried away for the time. When he resumed speaking, it was with a smile. "How much the little things used to bother me," he said. "How I feared my boss, disease, certain kinds of bugs, slippery streets and all the foolish things in the world, I guess. And I even feared the war until I got into the thick of it. I feared I might be shot, that I might contract some terrible ailment, that I might be interned, that I might not ever get to war and a thousand other things."

Then, when I got under fire and saw a world divided against itself, I realized, for the first time, how small most of the influences about us are. How utterly futile it is to fear

cash customer, still I believe it is entirely possible that I some day shall be attacked in such a manner. I believe that most of us fear the theater and railroad ticket office clerks more than we do the hotel clerk. Particularly the railroad ticket office man, though, admittedly, I don't fear him so much as I did before the government took over the railroads. If any of them get fresh with me, I propose to write a letter to an old friend of the director general, down in Nashville, about it and have him reprimanded. Or I may take it up with Capt. Oscar A. Price, who used to hang around the depot in Roncove, W. Va., and knows what fresh station agents are. Still, again, I may not say anything to anybody if a railway employee gets fresh with me. I usually have maintained a policy of silence in regard to them. It is funny, though, how thoroughly panic-stricken a fellow can get around a railroad ticket office window. Confident, for example, that he wants to leave town on the 8 a. m. train, he goes to the ticket office and says he thinks he would like to have a ticket on a train that leaves about 8 o'clock. As a matter of business precaution, the clerk suggests that he would like to know the road over which the prospective passenger desires to travel. Whereupon the customer blows up, forgets the road, decides maybe the train leaves at 8:30, takes the first ticket offered him, gets excited, forgets to check his baggage and dashes out in a panic. For what reason? His fear of the man behind the counter, I firmly believe. What, then, of the box office man?



THEY SEEM TO HAVE AN AWFUL LOT OF AUTHORITY.

anything or anybody save God, and I laughed and plunged ahead. And now that I am come back and am soon to enter civil life, I give thanks that I have come to know that fear is chaff and that there is no reason for it. He went away smiling, and I sat long and pondered on what he said. And later I talked with friends about his remarks, and I found—as, indeed, I long had known, but probably never realized—that all of us are beset with bugaboos that really amount to nothing, and that only a few realize their own strength.

Especially do we fear folks who appear to have the right to wield some sort of authority over us. Let us see if this is not true.

How many of us are unafraid of the man behind the counter, be he a hotel clerk, a theatrical ticket clerk or a clerk in a store.

The hotel clerk is, perhaps, the most striking example. It has been my lot to travel more or less, and yet I cannot say that I ever reached the point where, in a measure, I did not fear a hotel clerk. They seem to have an awful lot of authority. It just seems that when you have signed the register and laid down the pen you place yourself absolutely in their hands as so much putty.

Suppose we take a concrete example. For years I have known that certain hotels in New York advertised rooms with bath for \$2, and that they had no such rooms. They merely used that dodge for advertising purposes, depending on the timidity of customers who will not demand a two-dollar room to carry their profligating through. And so I have said times without number that some day I would stand on my rights and demand in the name of the American people, the Great Jehovah and the Continental Congress, a two-dollar room with bath. But I never have done it. Once or twice I have asked, mouselike, if there were any two-dollar rooms left, and, upon receiving a negative answer, quietly told the clerk to write down my name and give me a two-dollar room when one is vacated, but, of course, I never yet have received that room. Nor shall I ever receive it. Nor have I ever seen a man who obtained such a two-dollar room in certain New York hotels which persistently advertise them.

That is only one example of the many manners in which hotel clerks have frightened me half to death. After holding converse with one, even if it amounts only to asking him what time it is, I am so frightened that I do not know what to do. I usually speak off to my room after talking with him, walking sort of sideways, in the fear that he may take a notion to shoot me in the back, Indian like, with a pen. I never have heard of a hotel clerk doing such a thing to a

Is he such a high-salaried person, endowed with such surpassing ability or possessed of such overwhelming authority that one should not stand up to him and demand what he wants? No, nor does he claim to be. Yet when we prance up to the window do we not usually accept what he chooses to give us and totter away, fearful that we have said something to him that we should not have said or acted in a manner foolish? It always seems so to me. Many times I have sat behind a post, wondering what the performance was all about, and also wondering why I did not have nerve enough to demand the fullest information about where my seats were located. It was just the power of fear of the ticket agent, that was all.

It is almost useless to talk of the fear of waiters. That is universal. I have seen men who never touch fish eat large quantities of it because they feared to offend the waiter who brought it. And the tipping of waiters is nothing short of an outward expression of fear. How many persons, I wonder, tip out of sheer gratitude for services rendered? Not many, I should say. More often they fear that the waiter may tell one of the other waiters that the diner was a "cheap guy," or some other harsh thing. Or the waiter may even say that to his wife when he gets home. Of course, the fact that the diner knows neither the waiter nor his wife makes absolutely no difference.

I thought when the barbers advanced their prices, recently, that the fear of the barber would pass, to an extent, but it has not, as near as I can learn. We pay 50 cents for a haircut and 20 cents for a shave, and come through with a tip, the same as in other days. I even saw a fellow buy a dollar and a half's worth of service the other night, and then shake like a leaf and hand the barber a quarter. Certainly the man did not receive an extra quarter's worth of service, but he was afraid, I doubt, that the barber's union would blacklist him if he protested against the latest form of indoor larceny in barbering circles.

Of all the fears in this world, however, I think fear of the boss is the most widespread. Respect for the boss is a very good thing to have, I agree, but it should take no different form from respect for any other person who is honest, upright and pays his or her washerwoman. Yet there are those who quake at the sight of the boss, and all for no reason. I never have been able to convince myself that most bosses like to be quaked at, but possibly there are those who do.

Still, it may be that a certain amount of quaking is a good thing in such cases. The experience of a friend of mine who used to be a boss would make it appear so. He had a

hot-tempered Irish boy working for him, and, liking the lad, he continually told him to fear no one, to depend upon himself, and all that sort of thing. The boy believed in his boss and, therefore, took his good counsel. Took it so well, in fact, that one day, when the boss asked the lad to procure a hod of coal or a turnip seeder or something for the office, the lad flew into a violent rage and walloped the daylight out of his employer.

At present I also fear a laundryman who will not deliver my wash above the first floor. THE OBSERVER.

## Man Traps.

BY CAPT. H. B. C. PELLARD.

WHEN the German evacuates a position in his own time he spends hours of hard work preparing man traps.

Land mines and similar recognized devices of war are allowable and are used by all nations, but the German specializes in dishonorable stratagems, and takes a particular joy in setting concealed man traps in quarters which will be occupied by civilians. He is careful, also, to arrange the timing mechanism so that the explosion may occur months after he has left.

It was through one of these infernal machines that a party of French deputies visiting a recaptured town were blown up weeks after the place had been reoccupied. The machine used showed a high degree of misplaced ingenuity. Wires supporting a firing weight were passed through a vessel full of acid, which slowly ate into them until the wire was thin enough to break, thus releasing the mechanism and firing the charge.

Such an apparatus might remain undetected, bricked up in a cellar alcove, for many weeks. It could not be set for any particular time, but could be relied upon to go off at some far distant date.

These rather complicated mechanisms require a good deal of time to fix and have been used only in special cases, preferably in public or historic buildings of some importance.

The greater danger comes from the manifold variety of trench and dug-out booby traps artfully prepared to entrap the unwary soldier. Those may take all sorts of shapes, from a helmet arranged with a grenade inside which goes off the moment the helmet is lifted to cases marked "ammunition" or "supplies" fitted with a firing mechanism which detonates a heavy load of explosives when the lid is lifted.

Field glasses, pistols and even razors are tastefully displayed at the doors of dugouts. If an unwary man lifts one he finds it entangled in a loop of string, a strap or a length of telephone wire. The slightest pull and the whole land-mine is exploded.

The deep underground chambers and dugouts of an abandoned German line are favorite places for the setting of regular man traps. Men exploring incautiously many feet underground in the dark labyrinth may touch a trip wire, and explosions occur which blow in the entrances and block up the whole underground system.

In order to cope with these dangers, parties of skilled engineers who know all about the handling and mechanism of these devices are usually the first to enter any suspected dugouts. The traps all depend in one way or another upon the firing mechanism or detonator arranged to explode the charge. When once this has been removed the bulk of the charge is rendered harmless and can be taken away at leisure.

The same methods are used for dealing with unexploded land mines or bridges prepared for demolition, but not blown up owing to the failure of the fuses or too rapid an advance by the pursuing troops. In these the line of the fuse or electric wires is carefully uncovered until the detonators are found, and once these are removed the cases of explosive can be dug up without undue danger.

A variation of the explosive man trap is the German trick of poisoning sources of drinking water before retirement. Mineral poisons, such as arsenic or lead salts, and even sheep-dipping mixtures or agricultural poisons used for spraying vines or potatoes, are the stuffs most frequently used. This water poisoning is, of course, a direct contravention of the laws of civilized warfare, but the Germans are no longer regarded as a civilized nation and these breaches are expected and prepared for. Before any well is declared safe for the allied soldiery it is most carefully tested for poisons, both metallic and organic, by special field companies of water-testing engineers, who follow up the attacking troops for this particular purpose.

In actual practice the number of casualties from either man traps, land mines or poisoned wells is negligible, nor is the speed of assault in any way lessened by the threat of hidden dangers.

(Copyright, 1918.)

## No Difference.

A NEW YORK editor said on his return from an official visit to the front:

"The soldier can still have a good time on his furlough, but the war prices make a good time costly."

"A handsome young American officer was sending a wire one day in a London post office where I was mailing a package. The girl telegraph clerk, running over the officer's message said:

"I can't make out whether this reads, 'No funds' or 'No fun.'"

"Oh, well, what's the difference?" said the officer, gloomily lighting a cigarette."

## In a Bad Way.

"GERMANY," said Representative Ireland of Illinois, "is in a bad way. Let her turn where she will she can find no consolation."

"Germany reminds me of Smith."

"Don't mope, Smith, old man," said an optimist. "Cheer up. Look on the bright side of things."

"Which is the bright side," said Smith, "of a bad headache?"

# The Mysterious Wang Foo

(Continued from First Page.)

to himself: "Yes, we will begin with the fundamental things today. I will first see the place and then the people and then listen to what they said and did. The great master speaketh well to his little pupil!" And then Wang Foo disappeared from sight and an aged priest from old Tibet, carrying in his right hand a little flagolet and bell of bronze and in his left a bundle of tiny scrolls with ancient symbols and pious prayers and charms, passed out into the hustling highway of the broad Ma-Loo.

He came ere long to the servants' gateway of the Wellington Hotel and entering the courtyard crossed it and seated himself by the kitchen door. He took out his little flagolet and, fingering it skillfully, began to play one of the plaintive airs of his far-away mountain home. Music hath charms in every land on earth and China is no exception, so he was very soon surrounded by an admiring throng of listeners, who bade him enter and share with them their morning rice and tea.

"Listen, my children," he said, and he stroked his beard of gray—and there is no land where more deference and respect are paid to age—"listen to a tale of old Tibet." And they gathered all about him, the cooks, the table boys, the ma-fos and the coolies, and listened with eager ears and raptured gaze, as he alternately told and sang of a famous vendetta of the ancient days, in which a noble warrior invited his rival to a banquet and then hired an assassin to kill him while he sat at meat.

"A wonderful story, venerable father," said the head table boy, as the story was finished, and he took out from his girdle a few brass cash to purchase a prayer charm, an example which all the others quickly followed; "but these deeds were not confined to the ancient days. We have them now—and right here in this very house, where the deputy was poisoned scarce two weeks ago!"

"Here? In this very house? It cannot be. Tell me, my children, tell the old priest how the ancient deeds survive unto the present."

"Yes, tell the old father all about it, Chang," they said and heard it all. Show him the room and tell him who was there," they all cried in chorus.

Chang, the head boy, led the old priest into the private dining room and gave him the most vivid description of the scene. He told him the name of every person present, showed him just where they sat and recalled every dish upon the menu. The old priest listened with the deepest attention and pleased Chang more and more by asking close and leading questions. "Tell me slowly," he said, "for I am old in years and cannot take it all in, like one more young. See, I will make some notes of it in this little book, that, if I return in safety to Tibet, I may tell this wondrous story of the modern days to all within the White Cloud Temple—for they will find it hard to believe, I fear."

Then the old priest, returning once more into the kitchen, took up his little flute and bells and charms, and with a "Bless you all, my children," crossed the pavement of the courtyard and soon was lost to sight in the busy streets.

Late that evening, when the beard and wig and gown of the Tibetan priest had been exchanged for the short and comfortable kwa-tse or short jacket of the Chinese student, Wang Foo lighted his pipe and, seated at the table in his upper room, opened his note book and began to think. All was quiet, for the basket maker and his family, weary with the work of the long and heated day, had retired early. He thought and thought. He read notes and made other notes. He compared persons, places and events. Gradually, as the night wore on, an outline seemed to frame itself before him, indistinct at first, but gradually getting clearer, though here and there a piece seemed to be yet wanting. And this was the conclusion of it all:

1. Lo, the deputy, had been clearly murdered—killed by some subtle poison unknown to western medicine, but the fatal working time of which had been carefully thought out.

2. The deed which was handed to him, and which was seen by all and read to them, was not the deed to which he affixed the Tao-tai's seal. By some very clever sleight-of-hand one must have been substituted for the other at the very table and between the moments of the reading and the sealing.

3. The administering of the poison must have been done by some person present in the room, who timed the length of the meal exactly, and the same person or a trusted confederate must have exchanged the deeds.

All this Wang Foo counted on as a good day's work, but within the next four days he must supply these three missing links to make the chain of evidence complete, viz.: What was the poison? Who administered it? Who exchanged the deed? The hoarse whistles of the up-river steamers warned him that there remained but three hours before the sunrise, so, closing his secret diary and his note book, he turned in to his well earned sleep.

The next morning he rose rather late and took his noonday rice with the basket maker's family. In the afternoon he sauntered down to the Woon-sun gardens and, finding a cool seat by the river's bank, sat down to meditate and look over once more the notes of the night before. The junk and sampans gliding smoothly by on like human characters in the drama he was trying to disentangle. Two foreign yachts with their graceful hulls passed by, and then his eye rested upon a new mandarin gunboat with her flags and banners, but just as she got within his range of vision a loathsome beggar boat slipped in between them, and the ragged lepers with outstretched palms gave him a strange feeling of revulsion as for a moment their ugly craft hid the little gunboat from his sight. He looked again and two large carco junks laden with cotton were following in their wake. He glanced down at his notes and read: "Six people only were seated at the table—the deputy, his secretary, Mr. Lee, the owner of the property, Messrs. Mactavish and Owens, directors of the company, and last, but by no means least, Long Wing, the assistant interpreter from

the yamen, who acted as general utility man and go-between."

What made him pause and shudder as he recalled this name? What made him compare him with the leper boat that hid the mandarin from him on the river? He looked at the little diagram of the seats at table on that fatal night, and he saw that Long Wing's seat was directly opposite the deputy's. Another link in the chain was being forged most rapidly.

He hurriedly left the gardens and, taking a jinrikisha, told the coolie to take him to the old city gates. Descending there, he exchanged the jinrikisha for a sedan and directed the bearers to Tao-tai's yamen, where he dismissed them and passed into the gatekeeper's lodge.

"Am I too late to see an officer today?" he asked.

"Whom do you seek?"

"Long Wing, the interpreter."

"Alas, sir, he left for home a half hour ago."

He called another sedan and started in the direction the gatekeeper pointed out.

"You fellows know Long Wing?" he asked of the forward bearer.

"Yes, sir, we know him well."

"Do you ever carry his sedan?"

"The elder-born speaketh true; we often carry him, because both his bearers are ill at home."

"Did you carry him anywhere, perchance, on the evening of the eighteenth of the moon?"

"Indeed we did, and on the nineteenth also."

"Do you remember where you took him?"

"On the eighteenth we went to the mansion of the widow Wang, the one who sold her property for the foreign mill, and on the nineteenth we went into the foreign quarter and to the great hotel."

Wang Foo's thoughts were working faster as he saw the outline closing in. He stopped the sedan at the City Temple and, paying the coolies a double fare, said: "The night is clear, I will walk the few remaining streets." He crossed the bridge into the French concession and took the first jinrikisha for the basket maker's home. Once secure within the upper room, he unlocked the trunk, and, turning over slowly the pages of a well thumbed volume called "The Poisons of the Ancient Dynasties," he came to this: "The berries of the South Formosa lacquer-tree distill a noxious odor, which is stupefying and deadly in its effect. Concocted into an ointment it is one of the most virulent poisons known. It is generally spread upon a fan and the victim becomes quickly unconscious. Perfume of some kind is always added to conceal it."

Before his interview with the inspector, on the following Monday, Wang Foo had ascertained these further facts: First, the widow Wang had left for a long journey to Peking the day following the dinner at the hotel; second, Long Wing was formerly a resident of South Formosa; third, his brother, a compradore in the Peninsular S. S. Co., had deposited 5,000 taels in one lump in the Anglo-Asiatic Bank on July 18, Monday afternoon he completed the chain and when the doors of the private office closed upon him, the chief and Morehead that evening, there was unfolded to them the various steps of a crime almost unparalleled in their long experience. They were shown how Long Wing had accepted a bribe of 5,000 taels from the widow Wang to have her property substituted for that of the other parties, and how, to avoid suspicion, he had secretly passed this money over to his brother to deposit in the bank. He had gone to the hotel earlier in the evening and under the pretext of arranging some flowers on the table, had secreted the duplicate deed beneath it. Then, at the critical moment, he had pushed the first deed onto the floor and in pretending to pick it up, had dexterously substituted the second for it, and it was this that the deputy sealed. He returned later in the evening, looking, he said, for a lost memorandum, and had secured the former deed from underneath the table.

"But how did he come to go to the deputy's side?" asked the inspector. "Please explain that to us."

"Your excellency looks warm," he said, answered Wang Foo; "let me refresh you with some fragrance from the southern isles," and drawing a beautiful sandalwood fan from a box within his sleeve, he stepped to his side and began to fan him vigorously. The upper portion of the fan was covered with the deadly lacquer, you see, but the odor of the sandalwood concealed it. It took but a few moments for the poison to do its work, but those moments were quite enough for the impressing of the Tao-tai's seal. In the excitement that followed he deftly replaced the fan within its airtight case so that no others were affected by it."

"But did not the secretary and others have their fans?"

"Ah! That is just the important point. It was the eighteenth of the moon, you know, and the book of rites and ceremonies is very strict about the etiquette of fans. Feather fans alone are used after the fifteenth of the moon, and these, you see, could not have held the poison or concealed the odor of it. That is why sandalwood alone would answer."

"Morehead," said the inspector, "you and I have still a few things to learn about our celestial friends. Let us call this 'The Case of the Sandalwood Fan.'"

"Not a bad idea," replied the detective.

"In the Third Book of the Analects it is written: 'The superior man is careful to follow the rites and ceremonies,' said Wang Foo.

"Or, in other words," added the inspector, "whenever he wishes to refresh himself, he should use the proper fan for the season!"

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## A Bad Habit.

"HE is flighty. He is uncertain."

A senator was talking about an unsuccessful business man.

"Anybody," he went on, "may fail once, but when a man fails two or three times it is best to have done with him. It's all very well to begin at the bottom of the ladder, but this fellow has got into the habit of doing it."